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Livestock and Meat Industry,

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Livestock and Meat Products Division
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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Agriculture-Washington



FRANCE'S LIVESTOCK AND MEAT INDUSTRY

Livestock and Meat Products Division Foreign Agricultural Service*

SUMMARY

France, the largest country in Europe (excluding the U.S.S.R.), is the largest per capita meat consumer in Europe next to the United Kingdom. From a net importer, France has become a net exporter of meat and meat products in recent years, with the help of import restrictions and export subsidies. Its best customers for livestock and meat products are Italy, West Germany and Eastern Europe, including the U.S.S.R.

Both France's meat consumption and its trade in meat products have been steadily increasing. In 1956, however, total exports of meat were only 106 million pounds, compared with 197 million in 1955; and in the first half of 1957, imports exceeded exports. In addition to meat exports, France is also an important exporter of lard and fatback. Exports of these products in 1955 and 1956 were 29 and 43 million pounds, respectively. Currently, France is the largest exporter and the second largest producer of lard on the Continent.

Meat is the largest source of gross income to the farmers of France.

Receipts from meat animals in 1955-56 amounted to 740 billion francs, or 30 percent of the gross agricultural income of the country.

In accordance with national policy, beef prices to producers are supported by the government, though current minimum support prices are below current market levels. Production policy, as expressed in the third postwar Rural Modernization Plan, stresses increased output of livestock and other farm products to permit a decrease in imports and an increase in exports and thus help to solve the balance-of-payments problem. This Plan, now awaiting final approval by the government, calls for some shift from wheat to meat.

According to the draft of the Third Modernization Plan, meat production was to increase by 1961 as follows: Pork (including lard), 22 percent; beef, 30 percent; veal, 25 percent; and mutton, 3h percent. After the Plan was formulated, however, pork production (including lard) rose sharply to 2,370 million pounds in 1956, or slightly above the 1961 goal. The Plan anticipates an increase in domestic consumption of pork (including lard) by 18 percent, from 2,110 million pounds in 1954 to 2,310 million pounds in 1961. Exports are to increase from about 22 million pounds in 1954 to 110 million pounds by 1961, and 132 million pounds by 1965. This amount would be equivalent to approximately 5 percent of total pork production (including lard).

^{*}This publication is based partly on reports from the office of the U.S. Agricultural Attaché in France.

PRODUCTION

The climate and soil conditions in most of France are well adapted to the raising of cattle, sheep, and hogs.

In 1955, of the total area of 136 million acres, 22.4 percent was in permanent pastures, 9.5 percent in forage crops, and 9.4 percent in feedgrains and fodder roots, tubers and cabbage. Some wheat and potatoes are also used for feed. A substantial portion of the fallow land, all the noncultivated acreage and part of the woodland are used for grazing livestock.

The 16 departments of Northern France contain about 45 percent of the pastures of the country and a large percentage of the cattle population. This area produces approximately 35 percent of the beef and 40 percent of the butter. The cattle are generally dual-purpose—beef and milk.

Hogs are produced throughout all sections of France. Commercial hog production, however, is concentrated near the feed-producing regions. The majority of farmers keep a few hogs for their own use. It is estimated that 40 percent of the hogs produced are consumed in or near the farms--not marketed commercially. Emphasis is on meat-type hogs rather than lard or bacon types.

Total output of livestock products in France, comprising chiefly meat, dairy products, poultry and eggs, is higher in value than food-crop production. Livestock products in 1955-56 represented 61 percent of the country's gross agricultural income.

Among the factors contributing to the expansion of France's livestock industry are these: Large domestic markets, nearness to large meat-importing countries, bilateral trade agreements, and multilateral clearing through the European Payments Union with the importing countries.

Livestock

Cattle numbers in 1956 were the largest in Europe--17,792,000 head. This represents an increase of 1 percent over 1955 and 14 percent over 1938. The tendency to increase the cattle population is shown by the large numbers of young stock kept for breeding.

Hog numbers in 1956 were estimated at 7.7 million, or 8 percent more than in 1937. The hog population, however, was only 15 percent larger than at the beginning of the century and about the same as in 1955; a record number of hogs were slaughtered. In 1957, commercial hog slaughter is not expected to be so high and the forecast for 1958 is about the same.

The sheep population has continued to increase since 1950. In 1956, it was 8.2 million-2 percent above a year earlier-but still less than 85 percent of the number in 1938. The number of goats (1.2 million) remained almost the same as a year earlier, while the number of horses (2.1 million) continued to decline.

Meat

France is the largest meat producer in Europe except the U.S.S.R.; it ranks third in meat production in the world. Beef and veal, which account for more than half of French meat output, give France its lead in Europe. It is second to West Germany as a pork producer and to the United Kingdom as a producer of mutton and lamb.

Pork production is an important part of the total livestock industry of France. France is the second largest pork producer and third largest consumer in Europe, although French consumption per capita is below that of a number of European countries. It is estimated that 41 percent of the total meat consumed in France is pork. In the past 56 years, despite a very small rise in the hog population, the country's total pork production has increased substantially. This was partly due to improved breeding and to better feeding, care, and management practices.

Byproducts

Compared with the United States, France is not a large lard producer or consumer. In 1955 and 1956, total lard production was estimated at 295 and 330 million pounds, respectively. Less than half of the lard is produced commercially, most of it being produced and consumed on farms.

TRADE

In June 1957, the French Government tightened its import controls to reduce its adverse balance of trade. Its reserves of dollars and other hard currencies had declined steadily since early 1956 and had reached a critically low level. Imports from all foreign countries now require import permits, which are being held to a minimum. Preference is given to imports from countries in the French franc area and to countries with which France has bilateral trade agreements so as to assure a market for an equal value of French exports.

Livestock

In general, France carries on some foreign trade in live animals with neighboring countries. Recently it has been a net exporter of live cattle. In 1956, however, it had net imports of 65,822 head of cattle and calves, mostly from Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Denmark. The increased imports were due to strong demand for beef in France and the desire of the government to hold prices down. The import duty of 30 percent on live cattle was suspended from April through July 1956, reimposed, and then suspended again on September 6, 1956. A small tax was also imposed on the export of cattle in order to discourage exports and make certain that adequate supplies of meat would be available for home consumption.

France generally imports and exports only a small number of live hogs. Imports declined from a high of 193,221 head in 1955 to only 1,084 head in 1956. Imports of sheep, however, were large during 1956—229,629 head, compared with 124,203 in 1955.

Meat

As a result of strong demand and a slight decline in domestic production, imports of beef were encouraged during 1956. Total beef imports were 35 million pounds, against only 3 million in 1955. During the first 6 months of 1957, imports increased to 52.2 million pounds, compared with only 11.7 million during the same period of 1956. Most of the frozen meat was imported from the Netherlands and Denmark, with smaller amounts from West Germany and Argentina.

Licenses to import frozen beef from countries that are members of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) were freely given until June 1957. But the trade in canned meat and the so-called "specialty meat products" has had to be carried on through compensation arrangements. These arrangements vary. Early in 1957, a French exporter of canned meat had the choice of accepting a subsidy on his exports or the right to import meat in return. For each 100 francs' worth of canned meat exported, he could import 150 francs' worth of variety meat or other specified meat products from Argentina or Brazil, or 80 francs' worth from OEEC countries. A firm that chose the right to import could transfer it to another firm, and in February 1957 could sell the right to import 100 francs' worth of meat for about 35 francs. An exporter that chose to ask for a subsidy negotiated it for each transaction. In February 1957, the subsidies were reported to be 40 francs per kilo on canned beef (about 5.2 cents a pound at the rate of 350 francs to the dollar), and 47 francs per kilo on luncheon meat (6 cents a pound).

Imports of mutton, like those of beef, were high in 1956. Imports of pork, however, because of large domestic supplies, were only one-fifth of the 1955 level in both 1956 and 1957. France is more or less self-sufficient in pork products and the amount it imports is usually only 1 to 3 percent of total consumption. However, France imports considerable quantities of pork liver and other variety meats, amounting to 1 percent of total consumption. Imports of pork livers increased from 7 million in 1955 to 9.3 million in 1956, mostly from the United States. Imports of pork liver almost doubled, reaching 6.6 million pounds. Of this total, 1.5 million pounds were from the United States and 3.4 million pounds from Argentina, compared with only 1.3 for each in the same period of 1956. Considerable quantities of cured or canned pork and pork products were also imported in 1956. In the first half of 1957, total meat imports exceeded exports.

Imported pork livers are used in making pate by mixing them with domestic lard. Most of the 1956 increase in imports came from Argentina, largely because of special trade arrangements with that country. However, U.S. pork livers are highly competitive in both quality and price. The trade reports that they are of better quality than those from Argentina and it would buy more from the United States if more dollars were available. In recent years, imports of pork livers from the United States have mostly been arranged through private compensation arrangements, which are a type of barter. In 1956, \$400,000 was made available for imports of U.S. pork livers. The allocation was used up fast. About 2.7 million pounds of U.S. variety meats, mostly livers, was shipped to France during January to September 1957. The potential market for imported pork liver is said to be around 11 million pounds.

Compared with previous years, 1956 was not a good year for French meat exports, even though France remained a net exporter of 37.5 million pounds, if trade in live animals is also taken into account. Foot-and-mouth disease, unattractive prices to farmers, the tendency to increase breeding stock and the large demand for meat, all contributed to reduced exports of meat. This trend continued in 1957. During the first 6 months, exports of frozen beef, which in 1956 had totaled 25.3 million pounds, declined to 10 million pounds.

Byproducts

France has imported practically no lard in recent years and very little tallow; it is an exporter of both, especially lard. Lard exports in 1956 totaled 43 million pounds—about 5.5 percent of the commercial production and about 50 percent more than exports in 1955. West Germany was the most important market, taking more than half the total. Italy, too, and more recently the United Kingdom, have been good markets for French lard. Total exports of lard have been increasing each year since 1954. France has encouraged the export of lard through the so-called export aid system and payment of subsidies. Among the measures it took to help solve its balance—of—payments problem, France partially devalued the franc in August 1957 by imposing a 20—percent levy on imports of products other than fibers and many other raw materials and paying a premium of 20 percent on exports of products other than these raw materials and textiles. The export aid system was abandoned at the same time, except for textiles.

Exports of tallow totaled only 5 million pounds in 1956. The principal markets were Morocco and Algeria.

CONSUMPTION

Total meat consumption in 1956 increased 7 percent over 1955, pork consumption 15 percent and beef and mutton each 3 percent. The strong demand for meat in France continued throughout 1957.

Next to the United Kingdom, France is the largest per capita meat consumer in Europe. Its per capita intake of 137 pounds is subdivided as follows: Beef and veal, 68 pounds; lamb, mutton, and goat, 8 pounds; pork, 48 pounds; horsemeat, 4 pounds; and variety meats, 9 pounds.

French lard consumption in 1956 was estimated at about 122 million pounds, or 2.7 pounds per capita, compared with 12 pounds per capita in the United States. France relies heavily on butter and vegetable oils for cooking fats.

PRICES

The French Government supports hog prices at an "intervention" price level of 24.4 to 25.3 cents a pound (live weight).1/ When the price on the Paris market falls below this level, the Interprofessional Society for Livestock and Meat (SIBEV), a government agency, purchases pork for freezing and

^{1/} All prices in this report have been converted at the rate of 350 francs to the dollar. At the devalued rate, they would be 20 percent lower.

storage. Later, the government sells this pork for domestic consumption or export. When the price of live hogs rises above the intervention level, the government buys no pork.

Sales of all meat at the first wholesale level are taxed 7.5 cents a pound. In April 1957, however, this tax was reduced for pork to 3.4 cents a pound. Most of the tax is paid into the National Treasury, but a small part (5.5 percent) is deposited in the Meat Stabilization Fund. This fund is used to make stabilization purchases when prices fall below the intervention level, and to defray losses on these purchases, including subsidies on meat exported. A part of the 7.5-cent tax (11 percent) is also used for animal-disease eradication and for the Milk Stabilization Fund.

In general, prices of live animals were higher in 1956 than in 1955. In January 1957, the French Ministry of Agriculture announced the following support prices for beef on a dressed-weight basis:

Grade	1957 support average for country as a whole	1956 average market price at LaVillette, Paris
	Cents per pound 1/	Gents per pound 1/
Extra grade First grade Second grade	40.2 33.7 28.5	48.6 38.3 30.6

^{1/} Converted at rate of 350 francs to the dollar.

In July 1957, the average price of hogs was equivalent to about 26 cents a pound (live weight), varying from 24 cents for second quality to 30 cents for extra quality. At the same time, prices for beef cattle varied from 20 to 26 cents a pound. Wholesale prices of carcasses averaged a little over 40 cents a pound. Retail prices for pork usually are equivalent to about 65 to 75 cents a pound.

Support prices for 1957 are somewhat below 1956 prices and do not appear to offer much inducement to French farmers to expand production. Market prices are above the supports. Estimated 1957 meat production indicates some decline in output of beef, veal, and pork from the 1956 level.

GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR DEVELOPING LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

The policy of the French Government with respect to pork production may be summarized as follows: (1) Maintaining stable prices to producers and consumers, and (2) encouraging increased production and exports.

Price stability is accomplished by support prices and government purchases. Production and exports, which have already received considerable encouragement, will receive still more under the Third Modernization Plan now being discussed.

The draft of the Third Plan, which will cover the years 1957-61, calls for the "development of livestock production" and the "reduction of areas planted to wheat and sugar beets." The area planted to wheat is to be reduced from the present ll million acres to only 10 million acres by 1961. Vineyards are also to be reduced by continued payment of subsidies for uprooting. Areas then made available for cultivation are to be planted to coarse grains, such as barley and corn, and to crops that are at present inadequate, including forage crops. This will make more pasture area and larger quantities of forage and feedgrain available to the livestock population.

The draft Plan emphasizes that the "development of livestock production is absolutely necessary to meet demands of an increased population and a higher living standard, which leads to higher per capita consumption. To achieve this, grasslands will have to be improved and breed selection, artificial insemination and the creation of cooperative centers for livestock feeding, etc., developed." It gives priority to the development of livestock production and consumption, and sees 1961 goals for each type.

Estimates of meat production and consumption under 1957-1961 Third Modernization Plan

Meat	*	goals : Consumption	: :	as a perce	goal ntage of 1954 : Consumption
Beef Veal Pork (including lard)	1,000 lb. 2,856,980 992,070 2,425,060	1,000 1b. 2,590,405 992,070	:	Percent 130 125 122 134	Percent 125 125 125 118 125

The expansion in production is to be achieved by support prices and guarantied markets, plus technical guidance to farmers through expanded extension services. Beef production is to be supported by a campaign to increase the quantity and improve the quality of forage crops. Production of the types of pork that are more in demand by consumers is to be encouraged. Exports are also to be encouraged; it is planned that 275 million pounds of beef and 110 million pounds of pork will be exported annually. While the proposed expansion in production is entirely possible, greater incentives than are now in effect will be necessary if the desired expansion is to be achieved.

In 1956, production of pork and lard exceeded the 1961 goal of 2,425 million pounds by some 11 million pounds. A more serious problem will be that of educating farmers to produce hogs of the meaty type preferred by consumers. As for the plan of increasing beef production to 2,866 million pounds by 1961, this will require greater sacrifices on the part of the producer and the government. Unless prices are raised or costs reduced, it does not seem likely that production of beef will expand to the level of the 1961 goal.

Meat and meat products: French production, trade, and domestic consumption, average 1935-39, annual 1951-56

Commodity :	Average		: 1952	: 1953	: 1954	1955	: 1956
:	1935-39	: -//-	: -//-	: -///	: -//-	: -///	: 1/
	-	: Mil.	: Mil.	: Mil.	: Mil.		: Mil.
Production: :	lb.	: <u>lb.</u>	<u>lb.</u>	: <u>lb</u> .	: <u>lb.</u>	: 1b.	: 1b.
Beef and veal:		2,183	2,273	2,557	2,998	3,028	2,960
Pork	-	1,642	1,874	2,028	1,830	1,960	2,170
Lamb and mutton:	en en en	220	231	243	243	262	266
Horse meat:			****	176	198	196	211
Total meat	2/4,015	4,045	378 و 4	5,004	5,269	6بلبار5	5,607
Lard	220	220	256	285	282	144	165
Tallow and greases:	1 50	164	168	180	243	196	193
Total:	370	384	424	465	525	340	358
Imports: :							2224222
Beef and veal:		25	37	17	7	3	35
Pork	<u>3</u> /6	5 5	12	4	36	65	13
Lamb and mutton:	<u>3</u> 719	18	28	8	14	12	20
Variety meats:		8	6	14	13	18	10
Total meat:	51	106	83	43	70	98	78
Lard	1	3	1	(4/)	(4/)	(4/)	(4/)
Tallow and greases:	5	13	5	8	_ 2	6	(L/)
Total:	6	16	6	8	2	6	(4/)
Exports:			1222222	:3322332		:2332:22	323233
Beef and veal:		51	28	29	104	116	33
Pork		76	28	29	22	79	71
Lamb and mutton:		1	1	1	ļ	$(\overline{\mu}\backslash)$	(<u>h</u> /)
Variety meats:	en en en	1	1	2	6	2	2
Total meat:		129	58	61	133	197	106
Lard	4	6	3	11	16	29	43
Tallow and greases:		1	Ĺ	5	1	3	5
Total	22	7	7	16	20	32	48
Consumption:			3233222	:=#32;#2		2222222	222222
Beef and veal:		2,157	2,282	2,545	2,901	2,915	2,962
Pork	60 to 64	1,621	1,858	2,003	1,844	1,946	2,112
Lamb and mutton:		237	258	250	256	274	286
Variety meats:		7	5	12	7	16	8
Horse meat	-	-	-	176	198	196	211
Total meat:	2/4,066	4,022	4,403	4,986	5,206	5,347	5,579
Lard	217	217	254	274	266	115	122
Tallow and greases:	137	176	169	183	241	199	188
Total		393	423	457	507	314	310
200020000000000000000000000000000000000	J)4	2/3	4-2	471	201		710

^{1/} Preliminary. 2/ Breakdown not available. 3/ 1934-38 average. 4/ Less than 500,000 pounds.

Compiled from official statistics, other foreign source material, reports of U.S. agricultural attaches, and other U.S. representatives abroad.

Meat and meat products: French exports by country of destination, average 1950-54, annual 1956

						1						
	••	Average	e 1950-54			••			1956 1	5 1/		
Country of destination	Beef and veal	Lamb and mutton	Pork		Variety meats	•• •• ••	Beef and veal	E	Lamb and mutton	Pork	•• •• ••	Variety meats
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				• ••		• ••	el	• ••	i i		• ••	1 1 1 1 1 1
Germany, Federal Rep	5,531	i	12,305	20.	237	-	912,		0:	7,95	0 \	309
Ttaly.	6,591	1	8,8		001		2,679		∄°	1,16	9 0	31.6
NetherlandsSwitzerland	1,608	1	15		182		2,050		00	92,	¹ ₩	90
Israel	: 759	1	72	•	1		0		0	17	9	0
Hungary	1,212	1 1			10		0 0		0 9	-	0 (0 0
Algeria	2,845	77 در:ا	7,23c		269 01		04Te4		017	18 ₉ μ9	o 1)
Vences) TOT .	777	7,(0		3 ¥		422		C	בייר ר	-, ا	
French Equatorial Africa	389	37	578		18/8		82		0	99	יזע	0
Cameroons	3145	51	387	_	1		1		-		1	1
Tunisia	∄;	1 3	818	_	25		25		0 0	1,55	∾ (00
United States	7)0 6T		78	. ~	9) 0		0	234) ~ 1	00
Guadeloupe	153	1	736		1		•		1	1		1
Belgium-Luxembourg	\$ 595	1	ω ,		532		1		1		1	1
Martinique	39	and decay	930	_	50		1 1		1 1	1 1	11	
Greece	197		ì		1		1,25.		1	č,	∿ c	> C
• >	5,533	-			֓֞֝֞֜֝֞֜֝֓֓֓֓֞֜֜֜֝֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֓֡֞֜֜֜֓֓֓֞֜֜֜֝֡֓֡֓֓֡֓֜֜֜֜֡֓֡֡֡֓֜֜֜֡֓֡֓֡֡֓֜֜֡֡֡֡֡֓֡֡֓֜֡֡֓֜֝		>		>		.	
Indecalna /	50 71 .	54°	פטר 17 ב		ر ر		C) C	7.80	۱ ۵	322
French West, Africa.		្រក	1.251		8		677		71	1,16	. ~	73
Other countries	2,641	202	2,545		385		1,302		977	26,614		198
Total	53,310	878	47,109	•	2,291	ω	33,406		271	71,000	0	1,914

1/ Preliminary. 2/ Laos and Vietnam.

Compiled from official statistics, other foreign source material, reports of U.S. agricultural attachés, and other U.S. representatives abroad.

Lard, tallow and greases: French imports and exports, averages 1934-38 and 1950-54, annual 1955-56

Total	Other countries	Yugoslavia	Indochina $3/\dots$	Czechoslovakia	Cambodia	Reunion	French Morocco	Guadeloupe	Algeria	Belgium-Luxembourg	Switzerland	Netherlands	Italy,	United Kingdom	Spain	Germany, Federal Republic	Exports	Total	Other countries	New Zealand	Indochina	Australia	Belgium-Luxembourg	United Kingdom	United States	French Morocco	Brazil	Argentina	Uruguay	Madagascar	Netherlands	Imports			Country		
. 4,142	407		1	!	1	: 94	1	: 59	61	: 248	1	: 966	56	: 76	30	: 2/2,145		: 497	: 28		: 138		: 19	9	230	: 67	-	1	!	•• ω	 w	1000		Lard	193		
16,850	748		1	***	!	1	92	750	1,290	1,664	1,013	2,014	3,488	258	2,597	2/2,876		4.784	185	10	1	171	7	690	162	1	391	2,439	100	463	166	1,000	. greases	and	1934-38	Averages	
9,347	1,370	230	1	204	330	2,694	1	171	1	1148	1 1	85	1 _	Д9	0	3,868		1,232	215	1	1	1	177	1	J17	267	1	1	1	3 1	156	1,000		Lard	1950-5	es	
3,046	11.8		243	-	298	1	226	1	1,411	20	1	113	1	1	299	318		8,792	1,1,7	645	1	86	4,308	130	1,915	1 1	1 1	958	!	ի29	!	1,000	greases .	and	1		
29,109	940	1	1	1,870	3 1 1	1 ₀ և91	1	1	1	187	0	1	988	765	1	20,168	ij	86	20	!	!	1	!	9 1 1	66	1		1	!!	1	1	1,000		Lard :	195		
2,992	175		55	1	8	1	910	!	1,596	256	1	1	1	1	!	1 1		5,893 2	62	1	!	255	7	1	5,569	t 1	1	1	1	8 8 T	1	1,000	greases ·	and		Annual	
կ2,992	1,194	1	1	1	1	3,102	1 1	298	1	2,066	1 0	1	10,750	2,006	1 1	23,576		2	1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1	1	0	1	2	0		1	1 9	!	1	1,000		Lard :	1956	al	
5,247	86		1	!	1	1	2,165	1	2,480	154	1	35	1 1	1	1 1	315	11 11 11	2 22	ㅂ	!	!	!	1	1	11	!	1	1		8	!	1,000	greases	rallow	1/		

^{1/} Preliminary. 2/ Postwar Germany. 3/ Laos and Vietnam.

Compiled from official statistics, other foreign source material, reports of U.S. agricultural attachés, and other U.S. representatives abroad.

Meat and meat products: French imports by country of origin, averages 1934-38 and 1950-54, annual 1955-56

Average 1950-5μ
$\frac{1}{1} = \frac{1}{1} = \frac{1}$
1,663 843: 3,271 5,195 1,908 1,264: 201 5,102 512
566: 6,005 1,391 67
2,083 831 91 1,309 285 966
3,056 : 26 165 61
784
TT7 76 :
: 4,732
152: 5,306
215 1,006 346
1,560 2,346 3,078: 1,103 758 2,174
26,451 19,111 5,899 : 19,060 15,466 22,121

1/ Variety meats included with other meats. $\frac{7}{2}$ Preliminary.

Compiled from official statistics, other foreign source maternal, reports of U.S. agricultural attachés, and other U.S. representatives abroad.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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